



ATTACHMENT A Remarks

Claims 1 and 2 stand pending in the present application. By this Amendment, Applicant has added new claim 2. Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance based on the discussion which follows.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,155,285 (hereinafter the "'285 patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,405,751 (hereinafter the "'751 patent") and Powers (U.S. Patent No. 2,541,282) (hereinafter "Powers"). The Examiner alleges that the '285 patent discloses in Figure 2 all claim features with the exception of an O-ring being mounted around the main body, a spring adjustment arrangement wherein the outer sleeve is force-fitted into a third section, the outer sleeve including an inner threading, a hollow adjustable block mounted in the outer sleeve and having an outer sleeve threading for threadingly engaging with the inner threading of the outer sleeve, and the spring having another end abutting against the adjusting block wherein adjustment of a position of the hollow adjusting block in the outer sleeve changes a distance between the ball and the second section. However, the Examiner alleges the '751 patent and Powers teaches the aforementioned missing elements and a person of ordinary skill in the art would have employed the numerous missing elements to make the claimed safety valve obvious. For example, with regard to the outer sleeve, the Examiner alleges that Powers discloses an outer sleeve (elongated sleeve 20) threaded at 22 and connected to a third outlet section of a main body 9. Further, the Examiner alleges that the claimed "force-fitted" attachment of the outer sleeve within a body is considered to be

mechanically and functionally equivalent to the threaded outer sleeve connection taught by Powers.

Contrary to the Examiner's allegation, the present gas safety valve is not obvious from the prior art references cited individually or in combination with one another. Absent impermissible hindsight, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to modify the devices and combine the references as the Examiner has alleged to make the claimed gas safety valve obvious.

Further, although the Examiner has alleged that it would have been obvious to incorporate the elongated sleeve 20 of Powers with the devices of the '285 and '751 patents, Powers fails to teach or suggest the claimed outer sleeve which is recited as being force-fitted in a third section of the main body. To the contrary, the elongated sleeve 20 of Powers has external screw threads 22 screwed into internal threads 2 of the valve casting which is completely different than the recited outer sleeve which is inserted into the third section by way of a force-fit. Furthermore, this force-fit has advantages over the prior art which uses a threaded fitting in that the present force-fit avoids unintentional contact and movement which might rotate a threaded sleeve from a proper position.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that the present force-fit is in no way equivalent to a threaded engagement. One of ordinary skill in the art would not refer to the present force-fit as a threaded engagement and vice versa, i.e. one would not refer to the threading engagement in Powers as a force-fit engagement.

Moreover, the present safety valve with recitation of specific elements provides secondary considerations of non-obviousness over the combination of cited references

in terms of a safety valve which is a less expensive safety device while providing several advantages over the previously cited references as disclosed in the present specification.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned discussion, Applicant has added new claim 2 which explicitly states that the present force-fit is a non-threading engagement. Subject matter basis for added claim 2 can be found in the specification and figures as filed and, therefore, added claim 2 does not constitute new matter.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is not obvious in view of the prior art of record and that the present application is in condition for allowance.